

that by passing this legislation, we can change hearts and minds as well.

**NATIONAL FARMERS UNION
PRESIDENT LEE SWENSON**

Mr. JOHNSON. Madam President, I rise today to honor an individual for his extraordinary leadership for family farmers and ranchers in South Dakota and across the entire country. Mr. Leland Swenson has been the president of the National Farmers Union (NFU) for the past fourteen years, and the president of the South Dakota Farmers Union (SDFU) for 7 years prior to that. For the past 20 years, Lee has been the leading voice for family farm agriculture in the country. During his tenure in these positions, Lee has provided immeasurable service, support, and leadership for family farmers and ranchers in efforts to maintain prosperity of rural communities.

A native of Minnesota, Lee was recruited to begin his career with South Dakota Farmers Union in 1971 as the Secretary/Treasurer. Lee was a very successful organizer, resulting in an increase in membership for 6 out of his 8 years at this post. Because of his talent, initiative, and ingenuity, Lee joined the National Farmers Union headquarters in Denver, CO as Field Services Coordinator. Lee's dedication to building a membership base and maintaining that base is something to be admired. Returning to South Dakota, Lee was elected the president of SDFU in 1981. During his swearing in ceremony, Mr. Swenson pledged to "preserve, protect and defend the family farm system of agriculture." Lee has fulfilled that promise time and time again.

While farm prices were dropping and interest rates were rising in the 1980's, Lee rose to the challenge of preserving the family farm in his role as president. In response to a veto of an emergency credit bill by President Reagan in 1985, Lee organized over 8,000 farmers and ranchers to gather for a "Farm Alliance Rally" in Pierre, SD. This was the second largest farm rally ever to be held at the state capital. Two other organizations were involved in gathering attendants, resulting in 25 Jackrabbit Line busses bringing the farmers and ranchers to South Dakota's capital city. The overwhelming number of constituents rallying could not be ignored by the state legislators, therefore the state legislature appropriated funds to send the 105 member body plus the governor to Washington, DC to lobby Congress for the restructuring of farm and ranch debt at serviceable interest rates. This first rally served as a stepping stone for Lee to organize another rural rally 15 years later in Washington. In 2000, bus loads of farmers, ranchers, church leaders, labor organizations, and rural community leaders gathered at the nation's capital to rally for the sustainability of rural America. Without the experience, dedication, or conviction of Lee Swenson

this rally would not have been a success.

For the last 100 years, the primary goal of National Farmers Union has been to sustain and strengthen family farm and ranch agriculture. The key to this goal has been Farmers Union's grassroots structure in which policy positions are initiated locally. National Farmers Union believes that good opportunities in production agriculture are the foundation of strong farm and ranch families and that strong farm and ranch families are the basis for thriving rural communities. In order for these goals and values to be carried out consistently, a well-respected, talented, and dedicated leader is vital. That is exactly what Lee Swenson provided to the organization.

Lee Swenson has achieved a number of other accomplishments during his tenure with the National Farmers Union. Bringing the states of Alaska, California, and Missouri into the organization, organizing the single largest farm rally in Washington, DC and expanding the government relations, communications and education departments of the NFU.

As National Farmers Union celebrates their 100th anniversary this year, and Lee steps down from his post as president, the delegation body can look back on prior accomplishments and be nothing but proud. Proud of their organization, proud of their commitment to family farmers and ranchers, and proud of their outgoing leader.

Finally, Lee has always been dedicated to family agriculture, and I know he will continue to contribute to not only the state of South Dakota, but family agriculture across the country. Therefore, I wish him all the best and I will continue to rely upon his valuable insight on the sustainability of rural America. On behalf of the people of South Dakota, I want to thank Lee for being a true public servant who has helped improve the quality of life for thousands of rural Americans.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION ON MENTAL RETARDATION AWARD WINNERS

• Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I am pleased today to join the Illinois chapter of the American Association on Mental Retardation in recognizing the recipients of the 2001 Direct Service Professional Award. These individuals are being honored for their outstanding devotion to the effort to enrich the lives of people with developmental disabilities in Illinois.

These recipients have displayed a strong sense of humanity and professionalism in their work with persons with disabilities. Their efforts have inspired the lives of those whom they care for, and they are an inspiration to me as well. They have set a fine example of community service for all Americans to follow.

These honorees spend more than 50 percent of their time in direct, personal involvement with their clients. They are not primarily managers or supervisors. They are direct service workers at the forefront of America's effort to care for people with special needs. They go to work every day with little recognition, providing much needed and greatly valued care and assistance.

It is my pleasure to acknowledge the contributions of the following Illinois direct service professionals: James Adams, Louise Adams, Sue Bailey, Chequel Banks, Sharon Brand, Gwen Condon, Dawn DeLeon, John Ferro, Jenny Hoffman, Orrin Holman, Chau Le, Veronica Mayweather, Paul McPherson, Herminia Ortiz, Isabelle Ptak, Kay Quinn, Sarah Redner, Dorothy Rendleman, Robin Roux, Edward Schultz, Jenny Schwartz, Barbara Stroud, and Sandy Verschoore.

I know my fellow Senators will join me in congratulating the winners of the 2001 Direct Service Professional Award. I applaud their dedication and thank them for their service.●

RETIREMENT OF ELEANOR S. TOWNS

• Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, today I recognize the retirement of a dedicated public servant and to thank her for her contributions to our Nation. Since 1998, Eleanor S. Towns has been the Regional Forester for the U.S. Forest Service's Southwest Region located in Albuquerque, NM, and in that capacity, has been responsible for the management of 22 million acres of National Forests in the Southwest.

Eleanor Towns brought to her work a rich and diversified educational background and varied work experiences. Born in Rockford, IL, she received her undergraduate education at the University of Illinois, graduating in 1965 with an A.B. in communications. She received her master's in guidance & counseling from the University of New Mexico in 1968, and her juris doctor from the University of Denver College of Law in 1982. She worked with the Bureau of Land Management before transferring to the Forest Service in 1978 as Director of Civil Rights in the Rocky Mountain Regional Office in Denver. She held progressively more responsible positions before becoming the Rocky Mountain Region's Director of Lands, Water, Soils and Minerals in 1994. In 1995, she was admitted to the Federal Senior Executive Service and assumed the position of Forest Service Director of Lands in Washington. In April 1998, she was promoted to Regional Forester for the Southwest Region.

My office has had the pleasure of working with Eleanor Towns since her arrival at regional headquarters in Albuquerque. Despite deteriorating facilities when she first arrived, a situation that has since been rectified, she remained attentive to the multiple issues